

**SUBJECT: Implementation of a New Emergency Visitation Travel (EVT) Benefit
Relating to Incapacitated Parents**

NEW MATERIAL: The Department of State (DOS) recently revised 3 FAM 3740 to extend a new Emergency Visitation Travel (EVT) benefit to permit employees and spouses who are serving overseas to visit to a parent who has suffered a breakdown in health requiring reassessment of the parent's living situation.

EFFECTIVE DATE: 01/15/2001

POLICY

**USAID/General Notice
M/HR/PPIM/PP
02/22/2001**

**Subject: Implementation of a New Emergency Visitation Travel (EVT) Benefit
Relating to Incapacitated Parents**

A. INTRODUCTION

The Department of State (DOS) recently revised 3 FAM 3740 to extend a new Emergency Visitation Travel (EVT) benefit to permit employees and spouses who are serving overseas to visit to a parent who has suffered a breakdown in health requiring reassessment of the parent's living situation. The new benefit called "Incapacitated Parent" Emergency Visitation Travel was announced in DOS cable 08787 with an effective date retroactive to January 15, 2001. We are pleased to announce that under joint regulations this benefit is available to USAID employees and eligible spouses as well.

B. OVERVIEW

The purpose of Emergency Visitation Travel is to allow an eligible employee (or employee spouse) to travel at Government expense to the United States or other locations in certain situations of family emergency. Under the new policy, travel is authorized only for an employee (or employee's spouse) to arrange medical care or home care services or to evaluate a facility placement for a parent who has become incapacitated and may not be able to continue living independently.

Examples of circumstances in which Incapacitated Parent EVT may be approved include (but are not limited to) the following:

1. A mother's/father's/ stepparent's/stand-in parent's sight has deteriorated so that he or she may no longer be able to continue living independently;
2. A mother/father/stepparent must leave his or her assisted living facility because he or she requires medical or other care that is not available at that facility.
3. A mother/father/stepparent/stand-in parent is showing increasing signs of dementia and may require placement in a skilled nursing facility.

C. TRAVEL LIMITATIONS

1. An employee or eligible spouse is limited to two Incapacitated Parent EVT trips per lifetime;
2. An employee may designate a spouse to travel in his or her place; or
3. The employee or the employee's spouse may choose to use both EVT trips in this category in connection with the needs of one parent.

D. TRAVEL FUNDING

1. Transportation costs for employees (or employee spouses) will be paid from post funds.
2. Transportation expenses such as mandatory airport taxes and transportation between airports are authorized.
3. Other expenses such as transportation to and from the airport, per diem, and excess baggage or unaccompanied baggage charges are not authorized.

E. AUTHORIZATION PROCEDURES

Revisions to 3 FAM 3740 will be published by the DOS some time in the near future. No revisions will be made to ADS Chapter 523.5.1m which covers Emergency Invitational Travel in USAID because the reader is referred to 3 FAM 3740 as the mandatory reference for EVT policies and procedures. In the meantime, employees at overseas posts may begin requesting Incapacitated Parent Emergency Visitation Travel as necessary following the guidelines listed below:

1. Upon receiving notice that the parent of an employee (or an eligible spouse who is residing at the post with the employee) has become incapacitated and requires assistance to evaluate his or her living situation, the employee submits a statement (or self-certification) to the post, Principal Officer or Executive Officer (or his or her designee) requesting EVT.

2. The certification must include:

- the name and address of the parent and that of the care facility if the parent is under temporary care away from the normal place of residence;
- a detailed description of the circumstances which require emergency visitation travel; and
- if the parent is other than a biological, step or adoptive parent, a detailed description of the relationship which supports the claim the individual "stood in the place of" a parent to the employee or the employee's spouse during some Significant period of childhood prior to age 18.

A sample certification

I. (Name) certify that it is necessary for me (or for my spouse) (Name), to travel to the location of my (or eligible spouse) parent, (Name), who resides at (Complete Address), in order to assist in getting appropriate care or making new living arrangement due to recently discovered incapacity. I have the following indications that my (or eligible spouse) parent may not be able to continue living independently:

(Signature) (Date) (Typed Name)

3. The post submits the certification to the Bureau for Management, Office of Human Resources, Personnel Operations Division (M/HR/POD), ATTN: Cecilia Pitas or Executive Management Division (M/HR/EM), ATTN: Henry Reynolds, as appropriate, requesting approval of Incapacitated Parent EVT.
4. M/HR/POD or M/HR/EM, as appropriate, approves or denies EVT and provides the decision to the post.

F. TRAVEL IN ADVANCE OF AUTHORIZATION

Travel at Government expense without prior authorization is permitted, but the employee or eligible spouse must provide the required certification statement of the parent's health status and purpose of travel described above not more than 30 calendar days after completion of the travel. The employee shall be responsible for any

expenditure not approved by the authorizing office, and all such costs shall be subject to collection as an overpayment.

In the event the employee or the employee's spouse elects to travel in advance of authorization, the following statement must be included in the employee's certification:

"I have read and understand that all expenditures made by USAID in connection with my Emergency Visitation Travel (or Emergency Visitation Travel of my eligible spouse) (Name) shall be subject to collection as an overpayment in the event that approval of such travel is determined to be unwarranted. If I do not repay these funds immediately upon demand, I understand that the Government may pursue collection of these funds through deductions from salary, allowances, lump sum payment, or other remedy.

G. EMERGENCY INVITATIONAL TRAVEL (EVT) - INCAPACITATED PARENT Q'S AND A'S

The Department of State and M/HR have received a number of questions concerning the Incapacitated Parent EVT benefit. The responses given are included in this notice as additional information pending the publication of final regulations:

1. How does the two-visit limit work?

This means two visits for the employee's parents and two visits for the spouse's parents (regardless of who actually travels). It does not mean a couple may pool their four total visits to assist the parents of only one member of the married couple.

2. Does Incapacitated Parent EVT apply to locally engaged FS Americans and their spouses?

No. US FS employees locally engaged are not eligible for EVT. (per 3 FAM 3743 paragraph c in revised regulation).

3. How is Incapacitated Parent EVT charged to leave?

As with previous EVT, time away from post (other than while in travel status, which is not charged to leave) is charged to annual leave, sick leave (including Family-Friendly Leave), compensatory time off, or leave without pay, as appropriate. (per 3 FAM 3747 paragraph a in revised regulation).

4. Is there a limit on the duration of the time away from post?

Not in the regulation itself, but time away from post will depend on the employee's available leave hours or approved LWOP and the agreement of the post to release the employee for a proposed period of time.

5. What costs are covered by Incapacitated Parent EVT?

The same costs now covered by EVT for serious illness or injury or death of a family member: roundtrip airfare, including mandatory airport taxes and transportation between airports, but NOT transportation to and from the airport, per diem, or excess baggage or unaccompanied baggage. Also the travel limitations in previous EVT rules remain: airfare to a parent's location in the US is covered; airfare to a parent's location outside the US is reimbursed on a cost constructive basis of the cost of round-trip travel from post to the employee's separation residence of record.

6. Are there any changes to 6 FAM travel regs with regard to Incapacitated Parent EVT?

No. The preferred use of American flag carriers and other 6 FAM requirements must be observed.

7. Many employees today have more than two individuals in their lives who played a significant parental role. What happens when more than two suffer a health crisis and require family assistance?

Emergency Visitation Travel benefit for eldercare purposes is limited to two trips. The revised 3 FAM 3740 defines "parent" as a mother or a father, but includes biological, step, and adoptive parents, or individuals who have stood in place of a parent, and it states that in no circumstance may an employee or eligible spouse be deemed to have more than two parents. For this reason, employees must decide which two individuals they will claim EVT benefits for. Should an employee seek EVT to visit a third individual that travel must be denied.

M/HR/POD and M/HR/EM will track EVT requests. To ensure accurate information on employees (employee spouses), posts are required to advise M/HR/POD or M/HR/EM, as appropriate, whenever post approves EVT travel for an employee or eligible spouse when a parent dies. Posts should identify the name and SSN of the employee, who is traveling (employee or spouse), the name and location of the parent who died, and the date of travel.

8. If an employee uses EVT to attend the funeral of a biological mother, may the employee later request Incapacitated Parent EVT to visit a stepmother?

Yes, provided this is only the second "parent" the employee has chosen to visit under EVT. However, in the future the employee may not request EVT to visit any other parental individual beyond the two already chosen, in this case, the biological mother and the stepmother.

9. What if an employee, whose father is still alive but frail, visits a mother with early signs of dementia, arranges for in-home care, then subsequently learns that she has further declined and may need placement in a care facility?

The employee may choose to use the second Incapacitated Parent EVT to visit the mother, but there will be no other eldercare trips available to the employee to use in support of the father, should this arise.

10. May an employee send a spouse to visit the employee's ailing parent?

Yes. The Incapacitated Parent EVT rules recognize that in some family situations permitting the spouse to go to the aid of an employee's parent in failing health would allow the employee to meet family obligations and continue to work at the same time.

11. What if an employee remarries, and the second spouse requests eldercare EVT but the first spouse has already used two trips?

The second spouse may have two trips. The intent of this EVT is to provide family support when needed to employees and their eligible family members serving overseas.

12. What are the criteria for approving Incapacitated Parent EVT for an employee to visit an individual "who stood in place of" a parent?

The employee should provide information in the certification that demonstrates the stand in parent had day-to-day responsibility to care for and financially support the employee for a significant period during the employee's childhood up to the age of 18.

13. How does this benefit relate to regular EVT, if you use both of your visits for an incapacitated parent, can you still use EVT when they or the other parent dies to attend the funeral?

Yes, one round trip is authorized if the parent of an employee or employee spouse dies. This benefit is separate from EVT for Incapacitated Parent.

Point of Contact: Any questions concerning this Notice may be directed to Oveta Watkins, M/HR/PPIM/PP, (202) 712-5105.

Notice 0250

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